



April 20, 2012

President Barack H. Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The undersigned Board of County Commissioners of Archuleta County, Colorado are writing to express our unanimous support for protecting the Chimney Rock area in Archuleta County, Colorado as a national monument. In recognition of the outstanding community support for protecting and better recognizing this area, we have supported various legislative proposals to accomplish this designation in recent years. We respectfully request your engagement in this effort by initiating a community dialogue about establishing a national monument for Chimney Rock via your authority under the Antiquities Act.

Current proposals for a Chimney Rock National Monument offered by Senator Michael Bennet and Congressman Scott Tipton would protect approximately 4,700 acres of U.S. Forest Service land, while continuing to allow for hunting, wildfire mitigation, and traditional cultural uses. We appreciate the leadership our Congressional Delegation has shown on this matter, but are also concerned by Congress' failure to pass this broadly supported and bipartisan measure over the last four years.

Chimney Rock is a treasure of national significance, offering visitors a window into early Pueblo people's culture, architecture, and astronomical understanding. As the easternmost and highest elevation Chacoan site, it is also a part of a larger historic and cultural story in the American Southwest. Despite these values, the volunteer-maintained area lacks national recognition and sufficient protection to ensure its proper maintenance and care for future generations.

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With more than half of Archuleta County's land being in public ownership, the County is well aware of the economic values that public lands provide. Hunting, fishing, skiing, hiking, and other similar pursuits are a critical component of the community's economy. The greater recognition and visibility associated with national monument designation for Chimney Rock will add heritage tourism to the list of key economic drivers, bolstering our County's tourism businesses that continue to struggle with the lagging recession. Accomplishing National Monument designation in the near future will benefit Archuleta County's businesses, residents, and ultimately help to secure the regional economy for the future.

While we continue to support legislative efforts to establish a Chimney Rock National Monument, we would like to invite your involvement in our community's effort to protect this 1,200 year old area for future generations. Consistent with the open public process used to establish Fort Monroe National Monument last year, we invite you to initiate a local community dialogue about using the Antiquities Act to create a national monument for Chimney Rock similar to that proposed in legislation. We appreciate your consideration of this request, and welcome the opportunity to work with your administration on this effort.

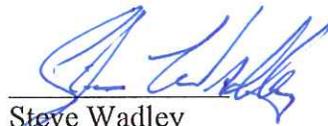
Sincerely,



Clifford Lucero  
Chairman



Michael Whiting  
Vice-Chair



Steve Wadley

cc: Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture  
Senator Michael Bennet, Colorado  
Senator Mark Udall, Colorado  
Congressman Scott Tipton, Colorado District 3  
Mark Stiles, U.S. Forest Service – San Juan National Forest  
Jimmy R. Newton, Jr., Chairman, Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
Levi Peseta, President, Jicarilla Apache Nation